

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Lost Buildings of Old Rutland: A Calendar



RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In the mid-1950s the wrecking ball removed the Rutland Railroad Depot making room for the creation of a larger city parking lot.

Introduction

The architectural legacy of the area known as "Old Rutland Town" is a rich one. The contemporary communities of Proctor, Rutland City, Rutland Town and West Rutland which now make up "Old Rutland" continue to possess numerous buildings—churches, residences, civic and commercial structures—of which they can be proud. In the case of Rutland City, the past three decades have seen the restoration of most of the original downtown facades, creating one of the state's finest 19th Century townscapes. In an age of "big boxes" and a landscape littered with prefabricated commercial structures, the public is concerned more than ever with preserving the dignity and craftsmanship of the past.

Yet many buildings in "Old Rutland" have been lost over the years. That they are no longer here is not so much a matter of neglect or insensitivity as of calamity and changing ways of life. Sometimes buildings outlive their usefulness and are impractical to maintain. Sometimes a carelessly tossed cigarette or a faulty electrical connection can spell the demise of a structure housing a century of memories. Each of the twelve buildings in the calendar has its own story to tell and each met its end for different reasons. While there is a nostalgia connected with their loss, time does march on and when a building loses its reason for being, its days may be numbered.

About the Author

Jacob Sherman is reference and technical services librarian at the Rutland Free Library. He is also Secretary of the Rutland Historical Society and Chairman of its Publications Committee. His most recent contribution to the Society's publications was "When the 'Babe' Came To Rutland, October 1919", *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* (Vol. 30 No. 3) in the Fall of 2000.

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Rutland Historical Society Archives.

Lost Buildings of Old Rutland: A Calendar

By Jacob Sherman

January – The Rutland Railroad Depot falls perfectly into the category of a building that lost its reason for being. The station was a fixture of Rutland life for just over a century. It was constructed in 1853 on the west side of Merchants Row between Center and Washington Streets on land donated by a civic-minded merchant, James Barrett, Jr. The architect was Gurdon P. Randall. Within a year or two of its completion the station bustled with activity as dozens of passenger and freight trains passed through Rutland en route to Boston, Burlington, or Troy, New York. At the turn of the century the station housed a waiting room with a lunch counter and newsstand. By the early 1950's, however, rail traffic was in steep decline and the lines were beset by labor unrest. A 19-day strike in 1953 dealt a fatal blow to passenger service that ceased later that year. Shortly afterward the station itself fell prey to the wrecker's ball. By the next decade the Rutland Railroad was no more and the entire complex of tracks and sheds that made up the Rutland hub was removed to make way for a shopping plaza.

February – The Proctor Hospital stems from the era when the Vermont Marble Company was the all-dominant presence in Proctor and a powerful force in the state. The Company erected the building in 1904 primarily for the benefit of its employees and their families. It replaced an earlier structure that had served from 1896 to 1902. The new hospital was located on a hill off Ormsbee Avenue and faced south and west where it enjoyed a sweeping view of the valley. Among the facilities were an operating room, accident room, surgeons' consulting room and etherizing room. By 1913 an obstetrical ward had been added and capacity increased from 18 to 30 patients. Between 1911 and 1915 records show that over 4,000 individuals received treatment. Amazingly, the hospital functioned practically to the end of the 1960s when a decline in the company's fortunes, together with the establishment of a new medical center in Rutland, led to its closure in 1968 and demolition soon afterward.

March – The coming of the railroad had a revolutionary impact on the marble industry. Whereas, heretofore, marble had to be laboriously and expensively hauled by horse-drawn wagon, trains could now more effectively move the heavy product. West Rutland was served by the Rutland-Washington line that by the

end of 1851 connected with Troy, N.Y. and eastward to Boston via Bellows Falls. The heavy rail traffic soon rendered the first West Rutland rail depot, located on the south side of Route 4 a little east of Pleasant Street, obsolete. In 1857 a new depot was erected on Barnes Street. It burned in 1878. A replacement building also burned in 1968.

April –When the second Rutland courthouse was constructed in 1792 on the east side of Main Street opposite the park, the present downtown wasn't even imagined. For the first half of the 19th century the business center of Rutland was on Main Street and the courthouse was the dominant structure, towering over the Protective Union Store to its north and the Franklin House hotel to its south.

While impressive, the courthouse was not deemed great architecture. The noted New England traveler Timothy Dwight described it as merely “decent” and some felt he was being generous. The building did, however, play a key role in the history of the state. The legislature met there in October 1792, and during the remaining years of the 1790s it alternated with Windsor as the state capital. It had a bell that in 1815 was vigorously tolled to celebrate the end of the War of 1812. In 1847, a huge clock built by Hiram W. Bennett and J. N. Williams was mounted on its tower. The clock, which was exhibited at the first Rutland Fair, had dials eight feet in diameter and a 13-foot pendulum. The structure, which had been financed originally by voluntary contributions, was built of wood and had been bricked over in 1828. On 3 April 1868, a lantern exploded in the adjacent hotel setting off an inferno that consumed several buildings including the courthouse. Fortunately, no lives were lost and all court records were saved. One year later a new courthouse, which still serves today, was under construction at the intersection of Center and Court Streets.

May – Few people entering or passing by the present post office and federal building at 151 West Street are aware that once an entirely different structure occupied the site. Memorial Hall was a monument to the area's many Civil War veterans. It served as a meeting place for the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic and also housed a museum of relics and mementoes from the Civil War. Set back on a spacious lawn graced with artillery pieces, the marble edifice was entered via a grand staircase. The structure was begun in 1883 at a cost of \$25,000 and completed in 1889. Local marble companies donated “many carloads” of marble including foundation blocks of two to seven tons each. The Rutland Free

Library occupied a portion of the basement from 1889 until 1929.

In the latter year negotiations took place between the city and the federal government. A trade was arranged whereby ownership of Memorial Hall and its property was transferred to the United States Government in exchange for the old 1858 federal building at Center and Court Streets, which would become the new home of the Rutland Free Library. In 1931 Memorial Hall was torn down to make room for the federal building and post office of today.

June – The building that housed blacksmith Fred Provo and wagon maker Henry Bolduc stood on the west side of Route 7 near East Creek in Mill Village. It was emblematic of the way of life that once flourished in this area just north of the city line. Two exemplary tradesmen who practiced their crafts in the late 1890s were Provo and Bolduc. Small boys could spend seemingly endless hours in their shops watching one fitting red-hot shoes to horses' hooves or the other shaving and chiseling wagon spokes. The building was hit by the flood of 1947 and, like its occupants and much of their crafts, is gone.

July – The old North Main Street swimming pool was a "structure" that a lot of Rutlanders still fondly recall. In fact, the term "swimming pool" scarcely does justice to this watery expanse that stretched nearly half a football field. The pool was built in 1929 by the city at a cost of approximately \$30,000. The designer of the 80-foot by 120-foot pool was Wesley Bintz of Lansing, Michigan. Several generations were to use the facility for a refreshing reprieve from the summer heat, but by the 1970s a new municipal pool had been constructed at White's Playground and the old one was deemed beyond repair. In 1977 it was demolished. A parking lot now occupies the spot where it once stood.

August – August is the month when the corn gets high and thoughts turn toward the coming harvest. No doubt such was the case at the Hayward farm which once occupied sizeable acreage on the west side of Route 7 near the southern boundary of the old Town of Rutland. Dating from the early 19th century, the farm eventually comprised an extensive complex of barns and other outbuildings. By the late 19th century, dairying was the principal source of livelihood. Horse-drawn wagons took the milk to market in metal containers. The homestead itself was solid and dignified and the porch notable for the lacy trim. Last used as the Rutland State Police barracks, the building succumbed to hotel and shopping developments in the 1960s.

September – Grove Hall, the summer home and estate of Horace Henry Baxter, a railroad and marble magnate, stood on the grounds now occupied by the Rutland Middle and Intermediate Schools as well as the Crestwood Apartments. This was one of the most palatial residences ever built in the state of Vermont. Baxter was a philanthropist and also Vermont's Adjutant General during the Civil War. Born in Saxton's River in 1818, he became wealthy with the rise of the railroads as a layer of track. Possessed of superb business and organizational abilities, he came to Rutland and purchased the William F. Barnes Marble Quarry in West Rutland. This quarry was later incorporated into the Vermont Marble Company. Baxter's financial dealings were national in scope. He wintered in New York City in a home on Fifth Avenue and was president of the New York Central Railroad until ceding control to Cornelius Vanderbilt.

Always drawn to Vermont, Baxter built Grove Hall as a summer residence in 1858. At that time the choice of location excited comment as Grove Street was far from the town's civilized and affluent precincts. The Baxter estate had the finest of everything including columned interior doorways, wainscoting, landscaped gardens and stables. Guarding the winding driveway leading to the mansion were marble pedestals atop which were two dogs sculpted of iron.

In the late 19th century following the death of H.H. Baxter in 1884, Grove Hall was operated as the Crestwood Hotel. However, tastes changed and such elaborate properties became increasingly expensive to maintain. By the end of World War II, the Crestwood had entertained its last guest and in 1945 Grove Hall was demolished.

October – The West Parish Congregational Church was built in 1855. A Greek Revival-style church, it stood on the east side of Pleasant Street in West Rutland just north of Route 4 and opposite the cemetery. It was a huge brick church capable of seating eight hundred people. Today, amid the woods and underbrush, it is difficult to tell where it once stood.

The impressive edifice cost \$18,000 to build, almost twice as much as first projected. It had two Ionic columns in front and was graced by a towering steeple.

Problems seemed to follow the structure from the very outset. In July 1854 the architect himself, William Flagg of Middlebury, fell from the building during construction, and later died of his injuries. Then, as time went by, difficulties with ventilation, acoustics, and the roof began to present themselves. By 1885 it was decided that a new church was preferable to expending \$4,000 on repairs. By 1886 a new church had been built at the corner of Chapel and High

Streets. In an early instance of recycling, the bricks from the old church were used in the new one. Today only a cellar hole of the 1855 church remains on the east side of Pleasant Street.

November – Today in Proctor on a parcel of land just to the west of the Marble Bridge on the north side, there is little to suggest the imposing residence that once stood there. This was the home of Redfield Proctor and later his daughter Emily Proctor. Redfield Proctor built the home in 1883 after a fire destroyed his earlier home on the site. The new home was razed in 1950 following the death of Emily.

Redfield Proctor was born in Proctorsville, Vermont, in 1831 and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1851. By 1870 he was managing the Sutherland Falls Marble Company, which by 1880 was consolidated with the Rutland Marble Company to form the Vermont Marble Company. In 1886 Proctor began a distinguished political career that would see him rise to governor of Vermont, Secretary of War in the cabinet of President Benjamin Harrison, and finally U. S. Senator from Vermont. On Labor Day, 1 September 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt came to Vermont and from the balcony of Sen. Proctor's home addressed a crowd of 2,500. Roosevelt was the third president that Proctor's influence had brought to his namesake town. Presidents Harrison and McKinley had preceded Roosevelt.

December – One of the most devastating fires ever to strike downtown Rutland claimed the Berwick Hotel, then known as the Town House, on the subzero morning of 7 January 1973. Five people lost their lives in the blaze that also damaged adjacent buildings and caused damage estimated at \$1,000,000. A downtown landmark for over a century, the hotel began life in 1868 as the Stevens House. Later, as the Berwick, its guests included four presidents – Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft, Calvin Coolidge and Franklin D. Roosevelt – as well as such notables as Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, John Philip Sousa and Alfred E. Smith. In that period it operated on the American plan and sumptuous meals served on silver service at a price of no more than \$1.25 were the order of the day. During the Depression, however, the hotel's popularity began to wane and the passing decades exacted their toll on the physical plant. Improvements to the building were being made when the fatal inferno consumed what was once one of the city's largest structures. Daylight brought a nightmarish scene of smoking, charred, ice coated rubble. The Berwick site continues to stand empty after 30 years. A parking lot known as "The Pit" now stands where once presidents were hosted.



The Rutland Railroad passenger depot was built in 1853 on the west side of Merchants Row between Center and Washington Streets on land donated by James Barrett, Jr. In the mid-1950s it was demolished to make room for an expanded parking lot.

JANUARY 2004

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

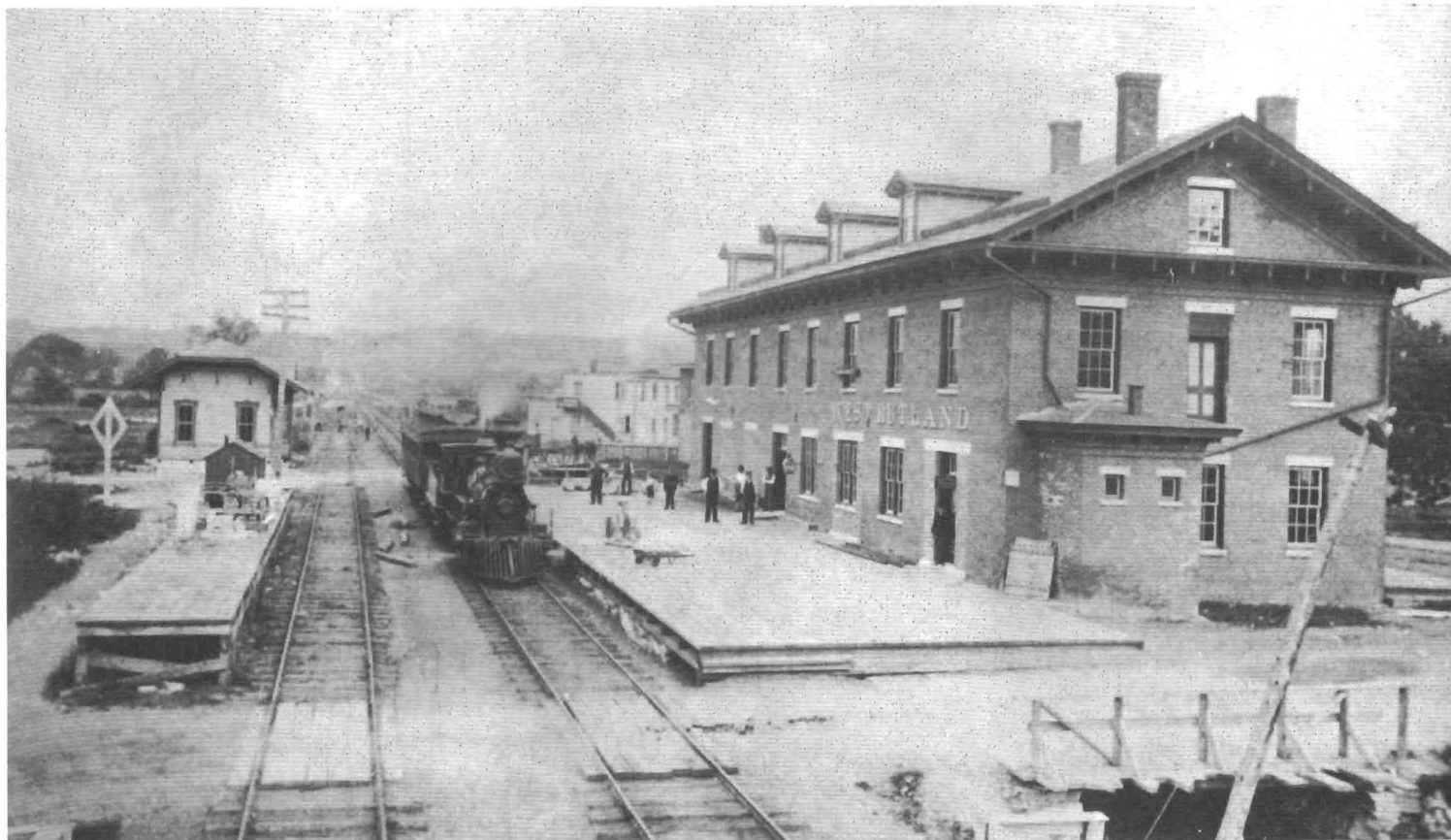
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



The Proctor Hospital was built on a hill off Ormsbee Avenue by the Vermont Marble Company in 1904 for the benefit of its employees and families. It replaced an earlier hospital. It was closed in 1968 when the medical center in Rutland expanded.

FEBRUARY 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 President's Day	17	18	19	20	21
22 Washington's Traditional Birthday	23	24	25 Ash Wednesday	26	27	28
29						



The West Rutland Railroad Depot was built in 1857 on Barnes Street to replace the first station on Route 4, a little east of Pleasant Street, that had become obsolete. In 1878 the Barnes Street building burned. Its replacement also burned in 1968.

MARCH 2004

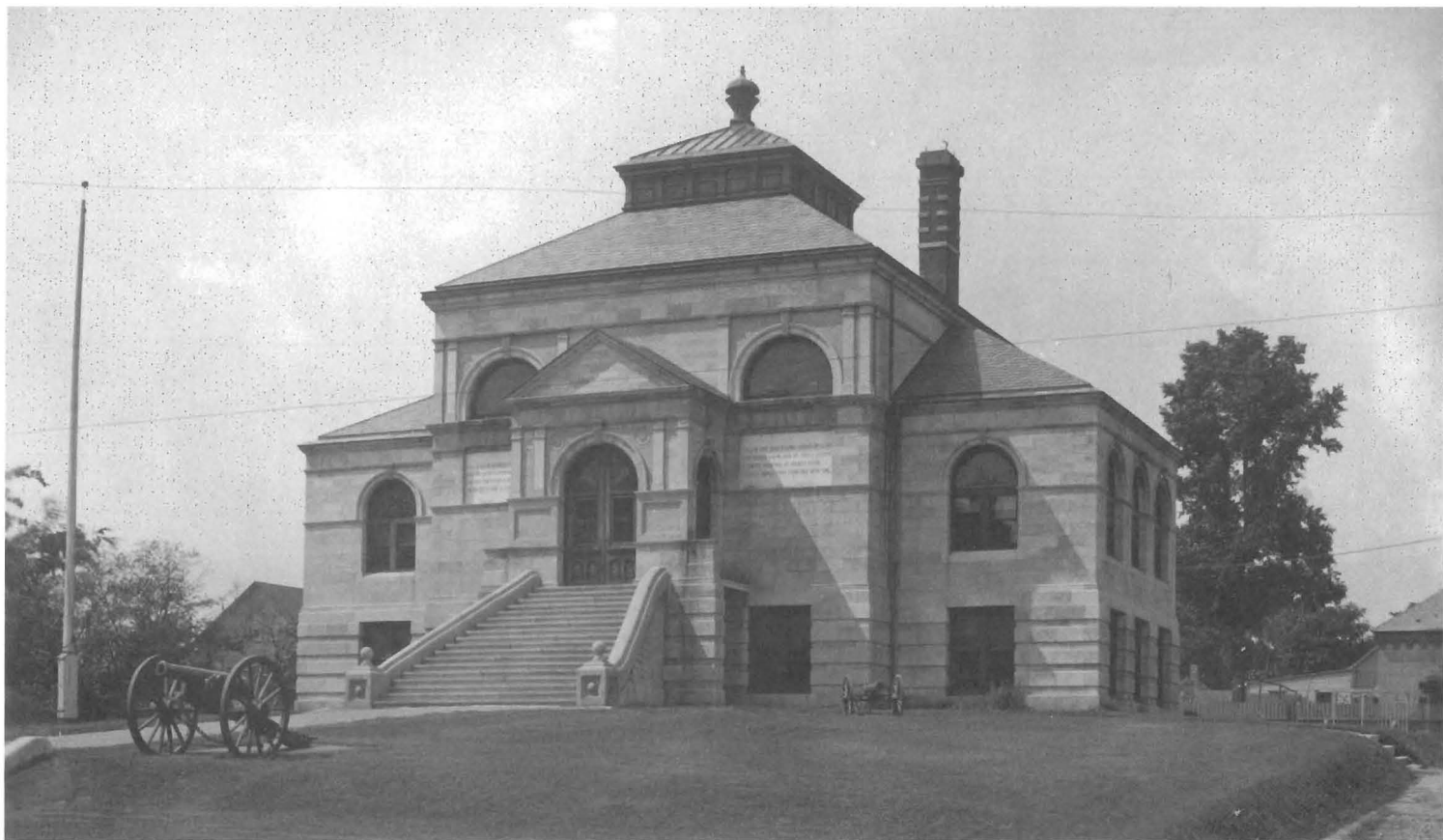
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



The Rutland Courthouse of 1792 was built on the east side of Main Street opposite the park. It was the second courthouse in Rutland. On 3 April 1868 it was destroyed by fire. The court records were saved but the building was lost.

APRIL 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Daylight Savings Begins Palm Sunday	5	6 Passover	7	8	9 Good Friday	10
11 Easter	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	



The G.A.R. Memorial Hall was begun in 1883 and finished in 1889 on the site of the present Rutland Post Office and Federal Courthouse. In 1931 it was torn down to make room for the Post Office and Courthouse.

MAY 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Mother's Day	10	11	12	13	14	15 Armed Forces Day
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31 Memorial Day	25	26	27	28	29



The building that housed the blacksmith shop of Fred Provo and wagon maker Henry Bolduc stood on the west side of Route 7 near East Creek in Mill Village. The flood of 1947 damaged the building and led to its demolition.

JUNE 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Flag Day	15	16	17	18	19
20 Father's Day	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



The Rutland City Swimming Pool was built in 1929 on North Main Street. It was a huge pool and hugely popular with the youth of Rutland. In the 1970s a new pool was built. The old pool was deemed beyond repair and demolished in 1977.

JULY 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



The Hayward Farm was a large early 19th Century farm on the west side of Route 7 South. It served many years as a dairy farm but its last use was as the Vermont State Police barracks. It was demolished for commercial development in the 1960s.

AUGUST 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Grove Hall was the summer home of Horace Henry Baxter. It was located on the east side of Grove Street north of Library Avenue. A few years after the death of Baxter in 1884, it became the Crestwood Hotel. In 1945 it was demolished.

SEPTEMBER 2004

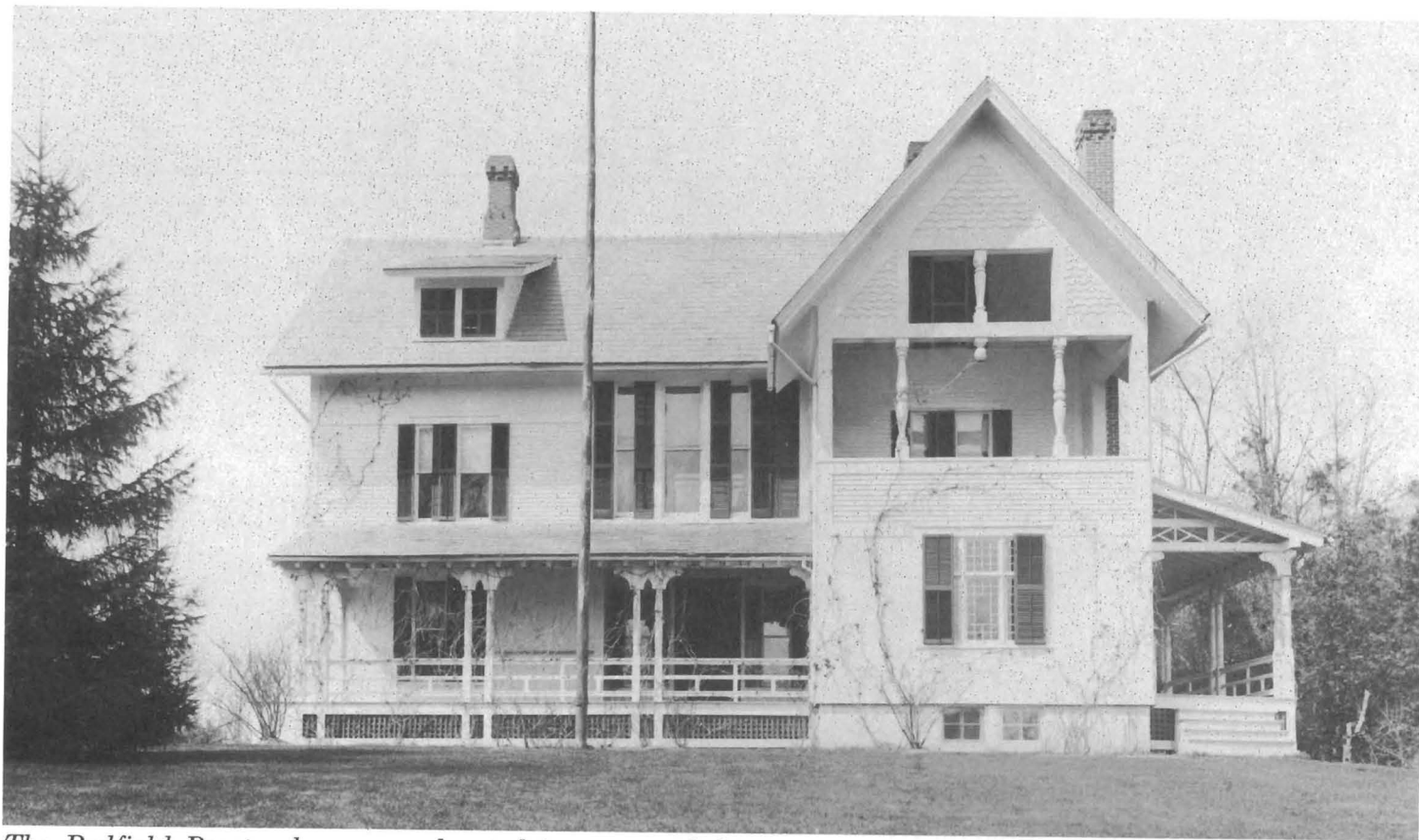
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Labor Day	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Rosh Hashanah	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Yom Kippur
26	27	28	29	30		



The West Parish Congregational Church was built in 1855. It stood on the east side of Pleasant Street opposite the Cemetery. In 1885 it was torn down to provide brick for a new church. Only a cellar hole remains to mark the original site.

OCTOBER 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Halloween Daylight Savings Ends	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



The Redfield Proctor home was located just west of the Marble Bridge on the north side of the road. His original home was burned in 1883 and this building was built to replace it. This house was razed in 1950 following the death of Emily Proctor.

NOVEMBER 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Election Day	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving Day	26	27
28	29	30				



The Town House on Center Street was burned in a sub zero fire on 7 January 1973. Previously known as the Stevens House, when it was built in 1868, and the Berwick House for most of its life, the building was a Rutland landmark.

DECEMBER 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Hanukkah	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	Christmas Day



Flames leapt high as the Town House burned on 7 January 1973.

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